AL-AAP Message to Members Regarding State Health Officer Order of Closure of “Non-Essential” Businesses • Revised 3/30/2020

Dear AL-AAP Member,

The March 27, 2020 State Health Officer order regarding closure of non-essential businesses to non-employees leaves questions in the minds of many members and practice managers, and our goal with this communication is to offer clarification.

We have been in communication with the Alabama Department of Public Health regarding the intention of this order. In no way are doctors’ visits to provide vaccinations prohibited. The order was intentionally vague regarding physician visits in order to allow physicians to make decisions that are in the best interest of the health of their patients. This is the interpretation of the AL-AAP:

1) Nowhere in the order were physician offices listed as “non-essential” and thereby being ordered to close.

2) It is our interpretation that the exception language (7.b.) further provides that well visits for children (especially where vaccines are crucial) are indeed necessary as part of ongoing treatment/care.

Furthermore, the AAP offers this clinical guidance as food for thought, suggesting that some pediatricians may choose to only see the youngest children for care.


Certainly, it is prudent both to reduce spread of the virus and for your practice’s bottom line during this crisis to employ telehealth (if you haven’t already started). Please see the Chapter’s COVID-19 page for members for all of the resources on this. https://www.alaap.org/covid-19-guidance-for-al-aap-members

Importantly, local prevalence of COVID-19 should be considered as part of the pediatrician’s clinical judgment regarding protocols for continuing well visits. Practices in hard-hit areas may choose only to see children for vaccine visits in the first two years, or if absolutely necessary, sick visits only.